

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

April 20, 2021

Shalanda D. Young
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

Kathleen McGettigan
Acting Director
Office of Personnel Management (OPM)
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Acting Director Young and Acting Director McGettigan:

I write to request that you promptly issue new guidance to federal agencies that will allow for the resumption of in-person operations where necessary to fully serve constituents. I've recently been contacted by many of my constituents in Missouri who are having serious difficulty receiving basic services from the federal government because certain agencies are limiting in-person operations due to self-imposed restrictions related to COVID-19. As vaccinations increase nationwide, it is time to safely resume in-person services at field offices that interact directly with constituents.

Over the past several weeks, my constituents have reported that certain federal agency offices are nonresponsive. While these complaints are widespread across agencies, particular concern has been directed at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) and local offices of the Social Security Administration (SSA). For example, constituents in Missouri are being met with a response from the NPRC that the agency is "servicing only urgent requests related to medical emergencies and burials" and that constituents should consider "delaying [their requests] until we are past this national emergency." In addition, constituents have complained about long wait times for even phone appointments at SSA offices.

Putting services for Missourians on the back-burner is unacceptable, especially given the fact that the rest of Missouri has largely returned to work. My constituents should have access to basic government services; if these services are not adequately provided remotely, then it's incumbent upon you and agency leadership to find another solution. Remote work cannot become a permanent reality for the field offices that need to interact with Missourians every day.

While I appreciate the extraordinary circumstances under which federal employees have operated over the past year, I believe the time has come to safely return to the office. To help facilitate this, Congress has appropriated substantial sums of money over the past year to help

agencies respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. I urge you to immediately issue new guidance that provides a pathway for agencies to fully and promptly reopen, along with any appropriate protective measures for the workplace to help this occur safely.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Josh" being more prominent than the last name "Hawley".

Josh Hawley
United States Senator